

## Yagmur Cay's GIV Blog

When I first learnt that I was going to Vermont my expectations were not that high. What was Vermont? Activism sounded good, but Vermont? I was not even sure it was in the USA. Yet starting with the first moment, the moment we met with staff member Pam, I fell in love with Vermont. When we arrived at the School of International Training, I couldn't believe my eyes because it was such a huge and amazing school in a giant forest with a beautiful view. SIT is a pretty big and extensive campus. It has four dorms, three learning buildings, one big dining hall, a lake, sports facilities, laundry facilities, and tons of trees. My dorm was called Bolton and my roommate was Michayla. The staff were incredibly amazing. They all behaved towards us like they had known us for years.

The first day of camp was so exciting. We started with getting to know and understand each other, recognizing our common ways and character traits. Then we chose our main classes. I chose 'Leadership' by Professor Ken Williams. In this class we discussed leadership skills, leaders from the past, current issues, **effections** of leaders on political issues, our personalities, our lives and ourselves. We learned a range of leadership skills, **what strengthens affect leaders**, its connections with family, race, childhood, and what a real leader is. We shared so many things. We cried and laughed all together. Prof. Ken is an amazing man. He almost knows everything. After two weeks we all knew that we were changed a lot and we were ready to change our world as young leaders. I can easily say that this class has been the most admirable, inspiring and life changing class ever. Other than the main classes we all had different classes each day. 'Homophobia and Capitalism', 'Indian Americans', and 'Building a City' were some of my interesting classes. I've learned tons of useful and interesting information from them.

It was Young Activism and Current Issues camp, so we had classes, watched documentaries and talked with activist and professors about activism, communication skills, globalization, global warming and current issues. We also did a Model United Nations debate. I represented Turkey. Making decisions and solving crises about global issues made us feel more important and more powerful.

We also did a lot of fun things during the two weeks; canoeing, cinema nights, eating s'mores (they were the BEST), camp fires, swinging, salsa night, barn dance, swimming, shopping, arts, sports, going to the Farmer's Market, etc. In my opinion, the most delightfully amusing activity was the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade; that day we all felt like little real Americans with our white-red-blue flags, American songs, and signs on our hands. We created signs about 'Undocumented People in USA' with my American and Mexican friends. It was my first time in a parade; singing, raising our voice, and knowing that we all were fighting for our rights together was a great feeling. It was the feeling of cooperation. After parade we went for watching fireworks in city centre and it was so great to feel that thrill and electricity

Every day, we had art times called 'Forum Theatre.' I chose music and we wrote a song called 'Love, Patience to Save Our World.' The song is about current issues and saving our world and it contains six different languages: Arabic, Urdu, Turkish, English, Spanish, and Irish.

During these two weeks I succeeded in things that I've always dreamed of and wanted to do. One of them was covering a Bob Dylan song with someone and I did it in probably the coolest way; I sang 'It Ain't Me, Babe' with the two program directors, both amazing men: Mr. Simon and John. I swore it was the happiest moment in my whole life. Simon and I were pretending to be a couple in love and we sang the song referring to each other while Mr. John was playing the song for us.

One other thing I always thought until we went to a ropes course in Vermont was that I was not brave. I still don't know how I managed to jump from 60 feet in the air or how I walked on a risky rope.

One of the benefits of this international program is that I've made a lot of foreign friends from Israel, Germany, USA, Egypt, UK, Palestine, Ireland, etc. I couldn't imagine that we could become so close and that they would be like my family. In these two weeks I learned so much about activism, current issues, cultures, our world, and friendship. It totally has changed my mind, my views and my life. In these 15 days, I've gotten to know myself, my power, my brain, what I really want to be, what my expectations from future are, and how hard I should work for making this world a better place. I know distances, colors, race, and countries are nothing when you want to do something together because we are all one race: human beings. I know how important friendship is. I know amazing people are all over the world and I know now I am a young activist and future leader.